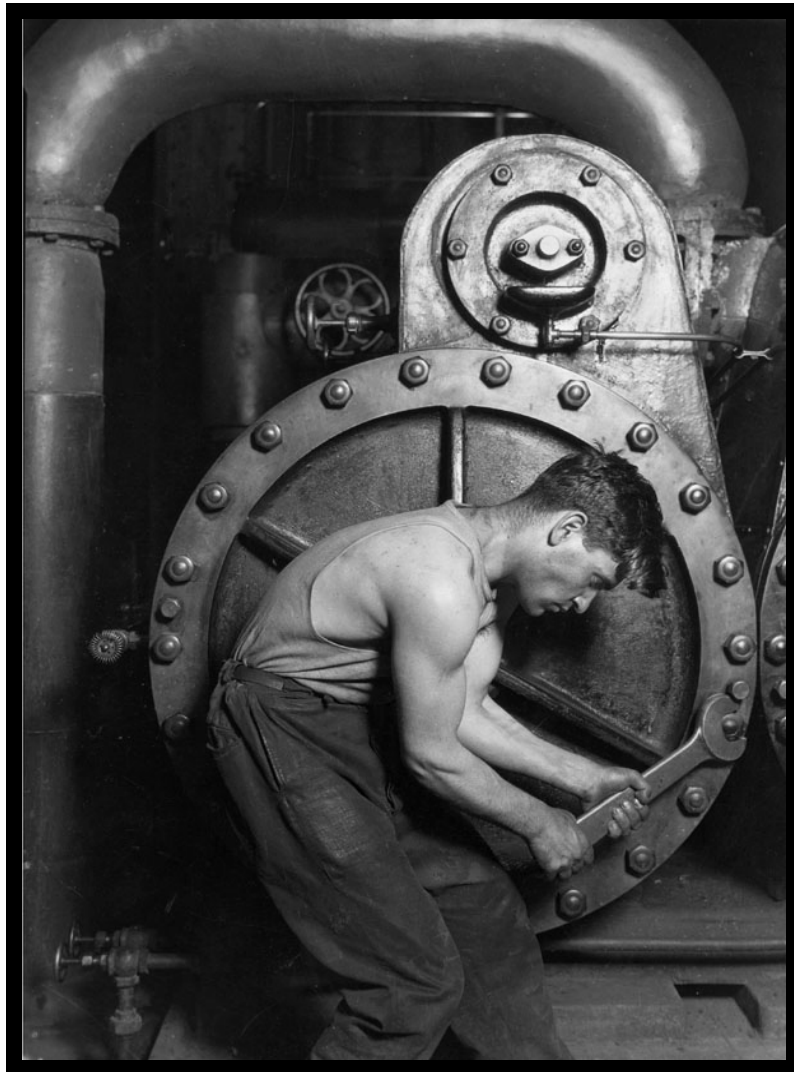


Chicago Poems

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By Doug Tanoury



FUNKY DOG PUBLISHING



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DETROIT, MICHIGAN USA



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Chicago Poems

Agamemnon Has Aids

I met a man who wore
The death mask of Agamemnon
And he told me "*That death*
Like every other moment of your life
Is something that happens to you

I came in contact with the body fluids
Of Iphigenia without surgical mask
Or gloves and I had unprotected sex
With Achilles and made love to
Clytemnestra without a condom"

And all of Mycenae whispers
Every woman's husband
And every man's wife
In irony fitting Greek drama
The hero home from Ilium

To bedsores lesions and conspicuous
Consumption ravaged now and stricken
With the strictly modern malady
That has turned him suddenly old
Like King Priam and just as sad

Chicago Poems

Allspice

Her complexion a blend
Of yellowgold and brown
The ochre color of allspice

Spilled on a kitchen counter
And her hair thickwide and
Wavy is a windy night

Without moon or stars
And her dress expansive and
Flowing is a theater curtain

Closed bulging and billowing
Unexpectedly in places
With hidden movement

Chicago Poems

Appassionato

As the sky changes
Above the horizon before sunrise
In foreshadowing of color

In her morning is made flesh
And sunrise a smile in weak tea
Light with only a hint of hue

Light and shadow move
Slowly in a threshold just below
Perceptible motion

Like feelings that move invisibly
And a thought's silent soliloquy
The most significant is unspoken

And touch is a symphony
Limbs instruments in moments
That progress golden like notes

In themes repeating and resplendent
Melodies with many voices and
Variations articulated in andantes

Soft in dawn's pre-light
I see her holding the promise
Of a day yet unlived

And nights unseen where
Intimation like moonlight
Shines on us

Chicago Poems

Arabic Script

Arabic script squirms
On yellowed pages--
The burrowed paths of woodworms.

Chicago Poems

Benedictus

This morning the lake is calm
Its surface the color of cut
And polished jade

And I note the sunrise that
Shines opalescence on still
Sleeping waters

In a moment so quiet that
If God stirred you would
See His movements

And if he spoke His voice
Would be ripples across
The stillness

Chicago Poems

December Rain

The rain gathered in large pools on the street
Mirrors the minimalist starkness of winter trees
Against a background sky of overcast indigo

Her body cool against my hotness moist against
My dryness and soft against my hardness as
Touch awakens memory in muscles and tissue

Reflective puddles capture flocks of starlings in
Choreographed flight and the quick mechanical
Movement of geese wings flapping furiously

Her lips in my mouth taste like cabernet sauvignon
And her scent is the smell of summer mornings
Kisses slow movements toward our awakening

Finely misted rain falls like perfumed spray from
The atomizer that sits on the dresser its faceted
And colored glass reflected in a bedroom mirror

Chicago Poems

Two Demons Conspiring

Looking into a window with shade drawn up
Furnishings in a room are so many shadows
Silhouetted ink-blotch fashion
In which I see two demons conspiring
Sitting on a divan
With heads close together almost touching and
I imagine the hiss of their whispers is
Like air escaping a punctured tire
As secrets move
From mouth to ear to brain to heart
Within the semi-darkness
Of a neighbor's window

Chicago Poems

South On Diversey

And I wonder if possible
To turn South on Diversey
Or if that street runs
Only east and west

And now I am confused
About directions and
Cardinal points and am
Lost without a compass

And I who have always
Known my coordinates and
Have measured my progress
And marked my position

And I cannot now discern
Those secret lines of
Longitude and latitude to
Navigate my way

And I am off course
Turned round and lost and can't
Get my bearings by sun in day
Or stars at night

And I know now it is possible
To turn south on Diversey
A street that runs only in
Directions east and west

Chicago Poems

Fences

I wished today
For a tall wrought-iron fence
Around me
Painted with black enamel
And dangerously points on top

The kind of fence
To keep some things out
And others in with
Fleurs-de-lis like crows
Perched on each corner post

A fence with wide gate
That opens reluctantly
With a metallic moan
And closes with
With a shrill clang

I wished today
For a long decorative fence
Graceful and stately
Yet solid enough
To be functional

A fence that encloses
A small garden
And narrow walkway
Of interlocking bricks
Leading to the porch

A fence that says yes
We tolerate no disturbance
Wish only peace and
To enjoy the quiet solitude
Artful fence work brings

Chicago Poems

Finches

Families of finches
Have built three nests
Under the porch awning

On a narrow ledge on
Spring days I watch their
Lighter than love mating

Like two autumn leaves
Blown together by the wind
In feather-light collision

Under overcast skies
With snowflakes falling
Blonde straw nests

Draw my eyes with their
Brightness and hanging stands
Disheveled and blowing

Like wind blown hair of three
Girls walking side-by side on
Lakeshore Drive

Chicago Poems

Fog

At night
Tall buildings
In Chicago's skyline
Are lit like Chinese
Paper lanterns
And seem to float up
Weightless like
Fog that
Drifts in

After 2 a.m.
Off Lake Michigan
To subdue brightness
And obscure form
At night
When darkness
Runs like liquid
Along Lakeshore Drive

Chicago Poems

Gesture

I watch her fingers playing in her hair
Slender and delicate as insect legs
Of a spider each moving independent

Of the others as she twirls a strand of
Golden spiral in unconscious motion
Pinches an arch of bangs in place

The pulling twisting lifting shifting
Constant rearranging in little girl
Gestures that are disarming now

Like a woman wearing a straw hat
Or walking barefoot in summer
Carrying one shoe in each hand

It's simple gesture that communicates
In the silent language of hands worrying
Here and there with this and that

And makes me leave my concerns
In a wrinkled brown bag forgotten
On a wooden bench in the bus stop

Chicago Poems

Grass

I watch the tall grass
Move in the wind
Along the road today

I noticed each blade
Is one quick stroke
Of a palette knife

That creates a blend of
Yellow and green that
Rises up a hill to sky

Chicago Poems

Holy Name Cathedral

Sitting in shadows of the downtown skyline
A gothic church with significance subdued
By high-rise apartment buildings an exterior
Of yellow limestone seems more poured
Than cut under a stained glass wheel window

I struggle with a bronze door that moves slowly
Only with great strain and opens entrance
To an interior marked by arches and pillars
Ornate and blooming with gothic growth
Where feathered stone floats and flowers

And rises toward vaulted-coffered ceilings
Covered with gold stubble somewhere between
Earth and heaven the crimson bonnets of dead
Cardinals hang solemn and still high above
The sanctuary in bright color of clerestory light

In the sight of this vast splendor I am moved by the
Gospel story of the blind man sitting near a road
Shouting to Jesus and refusing to be silenced
Imaging his eyes touched with the newness of site
Saw this same feast of color this same dance of light

Chicago Poems

Icons

At night the window frames
Of high-rise apartment buildings
Are lit with deep golden light
Like icon panels on the
Altar of an Orthodox Church,
And lone figures framed in light
High above me are ceiling frescoes
Of city saints and urban martyrs.

And I too, high above the waves
Of Lake Michigan that lap at the
The asphalt of Lakeshore Drive,
Am an icon figure, a silhouetted saint
With imperfect nimbus, standing
Stylized in a background of golden light
In a Chicago skyline elevated
In evening benediction.

Chicago Poems

Ladies Walking

On State Street ladies in trenchcoats
Walk large poodles with pompadours
And sculpted fur through dappled
Shade from locust trees growing behind
Wrought-iron fences in small frontyards
Of brownstones

On Astor Street ladies with hair tucked
In berets slowly walk perfumed Pomeranians
Past a doorman sleeping at his post
In morning light golden like the deep
Yellow paint on taxicabs that cruise
The street

Chicago Poems

Lakeshore

Late at night, unable to sleep,
I watch Lake Michigan at night,
Without stars and the
The whitening clouds,
It is darker than the sky,
The water still and undisturbed,
Without breakers foaming
At the shore or whitecaps
Leaping in the distance.

Late at night, looking out
Over the lake is gazing into
A reservoir of dark silence,
A mute abyss that that gives
Me nothing and leaves me
With only my own words
Like so many sleeping pills
In a bottle, sitting on a coffee table
In a high-rise by the shoreline.

Chicago Poems

Lake Michigan

Lake Michigan is milky green marble
With veins of whitecaps foaming
From shore to distant sky

Water rising and falling and rolling
Is alive with waves and boils
In constant motion

The horizon is a band of deep blue
That separates the pale green water
From the soft blue hues of sky

In a lakescape speechless
Like a movie without sound
That plays muted movements

The gulls fly without call
And the wind is a mere whisper
Of film winding through a projector

As waves explode quietly white
On the breakwater that is the
Curved gray line that marks the shore

Like the silent soliloquy of a mute
Speaking the sign language of the deaf
Motion alone carries meaning

Chicago Poems

Landscape

Lake Michigan is milky green marble
With veins of whitecaps foaming
From shore to distant sky

Water rising and falling and rolling
Is alive with waves and boils
In constant motion

The horizon is a band of deep blue
That separates the pale green water
From the soft blue hues of sky

In a lakescape speechless
Like a movie without sound
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Chicago Poems

Her Laughter

Her Laughter
A bird hidden deep in the
Green draperies of an elm
Singing from high branches
Soothing sweet

Chicago Poems

Laundry Night

Doing my wash in the 20th floor laundry room
With broad wide windows that give a panoramic view.
The Chicago skyline far above the ground traffic
Becomes a study in stillness, the only motion
The reflection of the dryer behind me
Spinning sheets alongside downtown towers,
Its portal doing lunar cycles full, half, quarter, crescent,
As white linens tumble dry like the moon in the night sky.

I stand in an urban aerial of black and white, spanning
The city heights and rows of terraces that I image
Must look like the hanging gardens of Babylon
Magically suspended far above the ground traffic,
Where winds blow without end and the only motion,
The fanning movement of foliage on floating trees,
Billow unceasing like linens in the wind suspended
Somewhere between earth and heaven in the night sky

Chicago Poems

Moon Over I-90

Stopped on I-90
Not moving in traffic
I watch the moon
Hanging above the overpass
Brightly white
Like the lightening
Storm of sparks when
Wheels meet rails
As the EL train passes

The lady at the toll booth
Bathed in florescent
And moonlight
Takes my money
Without smiling
And hands me my change
Wearing a tragic mask
As our fingers touch
In the traffic on I-90

Chicago Poems

Movements

In the cog wheels
And springs of spirit
There are workings
Too small and quick
To see

The mechanization of
Mustard seeds silent
Motion are dynamos that
Drive the Kingdom
Of God

Mechanisms too fine
To discern are the
Movements of the soul
Levers and gears
So Miniscule

Their purpose cannot
Be divined but
Remain puzzling and
Mysterious as the
Will of God

Chicago Poems

Old Ladies On State Street

Old ladies on State Street wear odd hats
And walk arm in arm slowly heads together
Recounting stories and dialogs of he said
She said I said in tones of shocked surprise

I find them annoying with their old women's
Blend of solipsism and narcissism
Only their hats are interesting and wonderful
Colorful and sculpted beaded feathered and furred

Their hats live lives all their own
With spirits separate and far apart from
The heads that carry them parading
Down State Street on November nights

Old ladies wear odd hats that capture me
And touch the artist who wants to stop
Them with open-palm gestures *excuse me*
Excuse me Madame may I touch your hat

Chicago Poems

Orpheus in O'Hare

Under jaundiced light from recessed lamps
Conversations run incessantly
Like water in a fountain and
Blend with the unceasing whirs
Of jet engines and overhead pages
Too weak to hear like neighbor's
Voices distorted and muffled by
Apartment walls

I am Orpheus descended in the underworld
Moving through the dull glow of Hades
Filled with spirits trapped and trudging
Aimless in corridors with terrazzo floors
As I search for Eurydice in airport
Lounges or standing at a payphone
Slipping one black pump on and off
Her foot

Chicago Poems

A Poet

In so much as I have seen
The downtown skyline cast
Its shadows on the surface
Of the lake at sundown and

In so much as I have met
My muse asleep in the back
Seat of a yellow cab on a
Crowded street and

In so much as I have scribed
The way her head leans back
With eyes closed and her mouth
Hung open slightly as she dreams

Chicago Poems

Sanctus

At night downtown buildings
Are lit like racks of votive candles
In a dark church

Some are white beeswax
Some are golden flame rising
To subdued weakness

Strobed finials glow dull orange
Like light through smoke gray glass
Of vacuum tubes

In mist that cloaks high peaks
And hides monolithic shapes with sky
Sunken to street level

Chicago Poems

The Trees Of Shore

The haze upon the lake
Hangs like a lace curtain and
Brings the vanishing point
Much nearer the shore and creates
A horizon just beyond the pier

This day of blue fog
That gradually spreads and
Grows toward violet evening
Is broken only by the rhythmic flash
Of a red beacon on the breakwater

And Spring trees
Still with more branch than leave
Resemble in shape the nerve bundles
Diagramed in highschool biology books
That illustrate human neurology

Out a ways along the shore
Where clumps of clustered trees grow
The water reaches up through bark
And fiber stem and leave
Green and lovely up the sky

Chicago Poems

Ti Kaun Yin

Chinese script
Scrawled on white paper--
Sparrows footprints
In the snow.

Chicago Poems

Venus On North Avenue

I saw Venus standing in the intersection
Of North Avenue and Wells Street
In pre-dawn darkness on a winter morning

In the middle of a pedestrian crossing
She stood one arm raised above her head
An index finger half extended hailing a cab

I saw her form a classical pose in a street empty
Of pedestrians and traffic rising from a sea of
Asphalt glistening with morning rain

Chicago Poems

White Noise

The passing traffic from
The downtown street below
Flows in my open

Windows making soft "s's"
Mixed with harsher "w's" and "d's"
And others that are

Only the consonant beginnings
Of sounds that never become
Words or contain meaning

But are always just
The rushing roar of water
Moving with swoosh and

Splash sometimes in random
Patterns of radio static shifting
Frequency and phase and often

Accompanied by the percussion of
Clunking transmissions that
Play sonatas to the

Harsh divertimento of a
Missing muffler and marked by the
Urgent bleating bark of horns that

Blends into a background babble
That speeds me off to sleep alone
On my living room couch

Chicago Poems

The Whores On North Avenue

The whores on North Avenue
Walk near the steel truss bridge
That spans the deep green
Water of the Chicago River

In early morning darkness
They walk in short dresses or
Black vinyl pantsuits with coats
Pulled tightly around them

Their faces hard and unsmiling
Eyes posing mute propositions
Blind to their reflections in
Storefront windows and the

Distant lights some yellow some
White that outline and shape the
Downtown skyline rising from
Horizon to haze shrouded height

Eyes searching North Avenue
Never rise to see the strobed finials
Presiding profoundly silent over
Nights unbroken by dawn

Chicago Poems

My Window

I went to my window today to look out
On the lake for an inspired landscape
The way I always do to gather up words
Like beach balls and towels that lie
Forgotten near the shore

The water today is a pale pool
Of iridescent green anti-freeze
That leaks from problem radiators
And puddles under cars
On the hottest days of summer

And white caps that break in the distance
Are thin lines of punctuation
Apostrophes, commas and dashes
That hyphenate and mark the
Improvisational movement of waves

That seem to fall and rise
Unmoved by wind but based on some
Inner plan that animates them
To surge white and flatten across
The gray concrete boardwalk

Like a film advancing frames
In slow motion the gulls fly slowly
Their wings moving lazily in ways
Without pattern or rhythm
They hang above a smudged line

That is a horizon where the colors
Of sky mingle with the colors of water
In a twilight haze that is the beginning
Of an April evening that I watch
Quietly rubbing against the glass

Like a housecat walking along a
Windowsill wanting to come in
To find a warm place to curl up
On the carpet and sleep unseen
And undisturbed under my bed

Chicago Poems

About Doug Tanoury



Doug Tanoury is primarily a poet of the Internet with the majority of his work never leaving electronic form. His verse can be read at electronic magazines and journals across the world. Collections of poetry by Doug Tanoury can be found at Funky Dog Publishing <http://www.funkydoggpublishing.com> and Athens Avenue <http://mywebpages.comcast.net/dtanoury1/Athens/index.htm>

This and other ebook collections of Doug Tanoury's poetry can be read and downloaded at: <http://home.comcast.net/~dtanoury1/Tanoury.html>

Doug grew up in Detroit, Michigan and still lives in the area. The *Chicago Poems* were written while he lived in downtown Chicago (Lakeshore and Banks) for almost a year. The city becomes not only the setting but also the subject of Doug's work.

Doug Tanoury credits his 7th grade poetry anthology from Sister Debra's English class, *Reflections On A Gift Of Watermelon Pickle And Other Modern Verse*, (Stephen Dunning, Edward Lueders and Hugh Smith, (c) 1966 by Scott Foresman & Company) as exerting the greatest influence on his work. He still keeps a copy of it at his writing desk.